

3/18/64

DRAFT MEMO: CRISIS-MANAGEMENT STUDY FOR THE INTERAGENCY PANEL

At the request of the Interagency Panel, Dr. Daniel Ellsberg has agreed to undertake a study of high-level decision-making problems in intense international crises. Dr. Ellsberg has committed himself to this study full-time for approximately six months; he will be assisted on a part-time basis by Brig. Gen. Glenn Kent and by Mr. Seymour Weiss.

The broad purpose of the study is to achieve greater understanding -- as a basis for better anticipation of problems and improved inter-agency response -- of the interaction between political and military factors and of the operational requirements and constraints that may be encountered in future crises.

The study will focus on crisis situations with the potential of erupting into intense military conflict, in particular those in which the threat or use of nuclear weapons is contemplated, but it will be necessary also to examine the lesser crises and conflicts that have actually been experienced and to explore decision-making problems that might arise in the early stages of warfare ensuing from an intense crisis. Among the issues to be considered are problems of communicating, in a broad sense, with allies and with opponents during a crisis, and problems of interagency coordination.

A major input to the study via interviews with Ellsberg, should be the professional insights of the individual Panel members themselves. An important object of the study is to retrieve, compare and analyse this collective experience, and to devise methods for preserving and transmitting such individual experience and perceptions, in future, more broadly and reliably; so that it is not only individual decision-makers, but also their colleagues, staffs and successors who learn from their experience in specific crises.

Ellsberg will also need to see existing studies of past crises, prepared within the separate agencies, which members of the Interagency Panel can make available to him.